

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Patrick Shanahan
Acting Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Acting Secretary Shanahan:

We write to address the recently released “Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense.” This report, mandated by Section 335 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, required that the Department conduct specific vulnerability assessments and develop mitigation plans to address the national security threat posed by climate change. Unfortunately, the report that the Department delivered to Congress on January 10, 2019, failed to meet these statutory requirements.

The final report submitted to Congress lacks key deliverables mandated by Section 335 and is at odds with the plain language of the NDAA. The statute required each Service within the Department to assess the top ten military installations that are most vulnerable to climate change over the next 20 years and detail specific mitigation measures – including their costs – that can be taken to ensure the continued operational viability and resiliency of the identified installations. The Department’s final report included no such list, nor a specific discussion of costs, in contravention of the requirements of the NDAA. The report also includes no methodological justification for its failure to mention United States Marine Corps bases or vulnerabilities to any overseas installations.

Even though the statutory language provided in the law is abundantly clear, the House Committee on Armed Services provided further clarification in a bipartisan letter to then-Secretary Mattis on July 16, 2018. In the letter, we not only reiterated the Congressional intent of Section 335, but also offered to answer any questions the Secretary may have had about any portions of the law that were ambiguous. It is deeply disappointing that the Department did not take notice of that correspondence and subsequently failed to fulfill its statutory mission.

We hope that this letter does not meet a similar fate. Please consider this our formal request for the Department to submit a revised report that thoroughly and clearly addresses the criteria outlined in Section 335 of the FY18 NDAA. Given the timeliness of the threat we face, we expect the revised report to be delivered on or before April 1, 2019. Should you have any questions regarding Congressional expectations, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you.

The Honorable Patrick Shanahan

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Sincerely,



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



James Langevin
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress